

STATE OF IOWA



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## Rebuild Iowa Office Performance Report



1/30/2009

This initial report covers the 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters of FY 2009. The RIO Quarterly Performance Report is designed to provide the Economic Development Administration (EDA) with a summary of activities, actions and progress toward the completion of the statewide economic recovery strategy. All activities and actions are based on the EDA scope of work.



## **RIO Quarterly Performance Report**

### **Period Ending: 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter FY 09**

### **January 30, 2009**

**1. Activities and actions to support and manage the efforts to solicit public, community and expert input on economic recovery issues:**

a. Each month during the period of July through December 2008, the RIO staff engaged with the Iowa Association of Regional Councils, city councils and leaders, local community outreach coalitions and recovery councils in many affected communities including New Hartford, Parkersburg, Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Iowa City, Palo, Cedar Rapids, Oakville, Coralville, and Waverly to solicit public, community and expert input and provide economic recovery information relative to:

1. Damage impacts and related data
2. Funding for interim financing for federal programs
3. Identify potential funding sources for specific community projects.
4. Economic workforce development assistance and recovery information.
5. Help communities build their recovery plans that would mitigate future damage.

b. The RIO staff has also managed economic recovery Issues and input through:

1. Establishing the six Speak Up Iowa Sessions and collecting feedback.
2. Monthly Inter Agency Coordination Team (IACT) meetings.
3. Workshops with communities providing information on recovery issues.
4. EPA Smart Growth Implementation Program conference calls to local communities.
5. The RIO website provides recovery information and solicits public comments and input.

c. The Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission (RIAC) was created by Executive Order Seven and charged with providing recovery reports to the governor and the Iowa General Assembly focusing on long term recovery and strategies the state could implement.

**2. Activities and actions toward identifying and quantifying disaster impacts on Iowa's economic sectors, including pursuit of academic economic impact study:**

- a. Initial damage estimates were gathered and compiled for the Task Force and 45-day reports.
- b. The RIO Economic Recovery Specialist has provided academic agency support and community based information to assess and quantify the needs of disaster affected communities and academic institutions. RIO has developed a relationship with the ISU Economics Department to potentially gather information from selected agencies relative to an Economic Impact Study and establish a clearinghouse of Disaster 2008 related materials and data in the future. RIO has followed up with State agencies who have submitted Post Summer 2008 Disaster Reports regarding projections for loss revenue, loss of materials, loss of employee time, etc..

**3. Activities and actions of implementing interdisciplinary "Task Forces" designed to bring in key stakeholders and experts to engage in dialog related to the overall economic recovery efforts of the state:**

- a. Nine task forces were created representing the main areas of focus for economic recovery: economic and workforce development, housing, public health and health care, education, long-term recovery, agriculture/environment, flood plain management/hazard mitigation, cultural heritage& records retention, transportation and infrastructure.
- b. More than 600 Iowans including experts, impacted citizens and other stakeholders served as either members or resource group participants in each of these task forces.
- c. Each Task Force met at least three times for day-long sessions.
- d. Each Rebuild Iowa Task Force provided the RIAC with a report addressing damage estimates, economic recovery recommendations, and needs relative to their area of expertise. These ten reports were then compiled by the RIAC and included in the 45 day report to the governor. The Task Forces' dialog related to economic recovery efforts of the state provided key information, clarity, recommendations and potential solutions needed for the RIAC to review and complete their 120 day report.
- e. One of the recommendations within the RIAC 120 Day Report was RIO to provide Iowa with the following needs:
  - 1. Provide leadership in Iowa's recovery efforts.
  - 2. Ensure transparency in the recovery process.

3. Provide monthly progress reports.
  4. Provide Individual and community Outreach assistance.
  5. Coordinate policy, activities and strategies with local, state and federal agencies
  6. Provide a clearinghouse for all recovery initiatives and activities.
4. **Completing economic recovery strategy plans specific to areas outlined in the grant scope of work:**

#### **Housing**

1. RIO assisted in the development and ongoing operation of a housing repair and rehabilitation program using state and CDBG funds. This program will assist displaced lowans in returning to their damaged homes and was identified as a first priority for recovery.
2. RIO monitored and assisted the Iowa Finance Authority award \$20,927,960 Heartland Disaster Relief Low Income Housing Tax Credits to 27 projects.
3. RIO is assisting communities are also working through their applications for housing buyouts. So far, work with them shows that out of the 2,614 properties originally submitted with their Notice of Interest in September of 2008, 1,196 is now on the list and of those, 867 are considered substantially damaged.
4. RIO proposed immediate disaster relief funding. Part of this appropriates \$24 million to IFA to administer a housing assistance program. Defines eligible persons as homeowners affected by natural disasters from May 24 to August 14, 2008 who meet income guidelines. Establishes priorities and authorizes forgivable loans.

#### **Transportation & Infrastructure**

1. Developed an assessment model for public sector infrastructure projects at the state level. See #9.
2. RIO is working to identify projects that will not be funded through FEMA Public Assistance or not completely funded through that program and identifying other funding sources for those projects. We are also developing complete listings of infrastructure projects and priorities.

#### **Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation**

1. We are working on establishing a Regional Watershed and Land Use Task Force to be led by our office that will provide more detail to future plans to ensure hazard mitigation through land use planning.
2. We are currently developing plans for a complete revision of Iowa's flood plain maps. RIO has led the work on identifying funding for this project.

3. We are working on several other policy initiatives to encourage hazard mitigation including requiring safe rooms in public buildings and requiring that all Iowa communities participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.
4. We are also working with the Insurance Division and Department of Natural Resources to develop a strong public education campaign around flood insurance to increase participation.

### **Economic and Workforce Development**

1. The FEMA Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) program has disbursed \$3.8 million. Under a presidential disaster declaration, DUA makes unemployment assistance available to those not eligible, such as the self-employed and farm workers, for the regular unemployment program.
2. RIO's Economic Recovery Specialist is collaborating with business associations and chambers on plans for further business assistance and assessment of business impact.
3. We are working with Iowa Workforce Development on a skills training program utilizing federal Department of Labor funds.

### **Education**

1. We worked with the Iowa College Student Aid Commission on a program to provide grants to disaster-impacted college students. \$500,000 was disbursed under this program in the fall. We continue to work with them to monitor the impact of the disaster on student's ability to fund their college tuition.
2. We are working on legislation for several waivers that would help school districts respond efficiently and allow the Department of Education to waive certain requirements in future natural disasters.
3. We are gathering information on students displaced due to the disaster and working on plans to ensure schools can handle the displacement and students are able to return to the district of their choice.
4. We are working with school districts to identify funding to establish safe rooms.

### **Public health and Healthcare**

1. The 25 Community Recovery Committees have developed their own Case Management programs with RIO and FEMA guidance and coordination. RIO shares technical information and provides oversight to ensure these programs are effective.
2. We have worked to receive and promote funding for mental health services and continue to monitor the effectiveness of those programs.
3. We are working to establish priorities for Social Services Block Grant funding that is coming into the state and to advocate for more funding in this area. These funds will be used for mental health services, public health services and services for the elderly.

### **Agriculture and Environment**

1. We are working on establishing a Regional Watershed and Land Use Task Force to be led by our office that will provide more detail to future plans to ensure hazard mitigation through land use planning.
2. RIO has coordinated monthly with the USDA, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) and DNR representatives to review progress toward debris removal, affected wastewater treatment plant repairs and renovations, and estimated repair costs.
3. We have worked with USDA on several disaster-related programs including Emergency Watershed and Emergency Conservation. We are working to secure more funding in these areas and to work with them to establish priorities for that funding that fit with the larger economic recovery and mitigation strategies.
4. We have worked with federal agencies to identify the unmet needs to farming families and find programs to assist them.

#### **Cultural Heritage**

1. The RIO staff coordinated recovery strategy with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the State Historic Preservation Office, the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division, the Iowa Historic Preservation Alliance, the City of Cedar Rapids and the City of Cedar Rapids Historic Preservation Commission to agree on mitigation measures for significant properties demolished under the Health and Safety Demolition Program.
2. We are completing plans for alternative space assistance for artists in future disasters and changes to current historic preservation grants and tax credits to increase the strategic use in disaster recovery.
3. We are working to identify funding for non-profit organizations that would include cultural non-profits to provide more assistance to keep them viable.

#### **Records Retention**

1. Through the task force process, we have identified that a statewide system of support and training for local officials charged with records retention was necessary to improve retention systems prior to future disasters. We are introducing legislation that would create a staff position in state government charged with providing these connections and technical assistance.

#### **Long-Term Recovery Planning**

1. The RIO co-sponsored the first Long Term Recovery Planning Conference and workshop in December at the Coralville Marriott with over 250 in attendance. The conference provided information about various disaster assistance programs and projects.
2. Working to establish a coordinating council of state agencies and other partners to assist in ongoing long-term planning.
3. Working with communities on their long-term planning focus and incorporating their plans into the overall long-term economic recovery strategy plan.

**5. Actions and activities toward the conduct and information gathered during the six “Speak Up Iowa” listening sessions:**

- a. The six Speak Up Iowa! Listening sessions were set up and staffed by members of the Rebuild Iowa Office and represented by each of the nine Rebuild Iowa Task Forces. Comments were submitted on input forms as well as via online electronic surveys were compiled by the RIO and published as a report in August with over 150 “Speak Up” feedback responses. This report provided the governor, chairman of the RIAC, RIO, and all nine task forces’ with information addressing various disaster recovery immediate needs as well as recommendations for long term recovery strategies in nine separate areas. The nine Rebuild Iowa Task Forces then used this specific information as the basis for their fact finding workshops and ultimately, their report to the RIAC.
- b. The Rebuild Iowa Office has maintained focus on these Speak Up Iowa recommendations to guide RIO activities, legislative recommendations and engagement strategies that will meet present disaster economic needs and help prevent damage from occurring in future disasters. These recommendations can be found in the Speak Up Iowa Public Input Final Report.

**6. Activities and action toward community recovery strategy plans:**

- a. RIO collaborated on the development and publishing of Guide to Recovery Resources and Project and Program Development Guide template.
- b. RIO Community Liaisons assigned to ten of the hardest hit communities:
  - i. New Hartford, Parkersburg, Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Iowa City, Palo, Cedar Rapids, Oakville, Coralville, Waverly
  - ii. Worked in collaboration with FEMA ESF #14 to establish planning committees in New Hartford, Parkersburg, Palo, Oakville, and Waverly.

- iii. In collaboration with FEMA, Iowa State University, University of Iowa, American Institute of Architects – Iowa Chapter, Iowa Chapter of American Planning Association, facilitated community design workshop in Oakville
- iv. Facilitated community recovery groups and planning meetings
- v. Represented RIO and participate in other community meetings related to recovery to ensure consistent communication
- vi. Provided recovery Technical Assistance to Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, and Coralville.
- vii. Facilitated Housing Workshop in Cedar Rapids for 25 community leaders, HUD, Iowa Finance Authority, and Iowa Department of Economic Development.
- viii. Direct liaison assigned to Cedar Rapids due to magnitude of damage; RIO satellite office established, co-located with local case management workers (long-term recovery committee.
- ix. Assisted in the development of Community Recovery Reports, Strategies, and Plans which can be viewed here:  
[http://www.rio.iowa.gov/about\\_us/index.html](http://www.rio.iowa.gov/about_us/index.html)

**7. Activities and action toward regional recovery strategy plans:**

- a. Strategic planning towards a system of regular regional cooperation utilizing existing regional partnership include COGs, economic development regions and watersheds.
- b. RIO has engaged with the Cedar River Initiative group to develop Long-Term Community Recovery Strategy for river enhancement through Black Hawk County, Cedar Falls and Waterloo.
- c. RIO provided links to and introduced Oakville to opportunities with Iowa State University Extension, Naturally Louisa (economic development group), and the regional small business development center.

**8. Activities and action toward bringing federal and state agency partners together to address disaster recovery issues and join in economic recovery strategy planning efforts:**

- a. RIO LTR Team convened bi-monthly Inter-Agency Coordination Team (IACT) to better understand and coordinate recovery efforts of federal, state, and local governments and nongovernmental organizations.
  - i. 11 Meetings were held during July through December.
  - ii. 20 to 35 agency representatives participated in each meeting



- iii. Road blocks to recovery efforts were identified, discussed and resolved with group input.
    - iv. Introduced recovery projects to Inter-Agency Coordination Team of State and Federal representatives:
      - Coralville – Transit/Park Facility relocation
      - Iowa City – Relocation and Expansion of Wastewater Treatment Facility & Redevelopment of North Facility
      - Cedar Rapids – Co-Generation Energy Plant
      - Oakville – general redevelopment issues and plans
  - b. RIO worked with EDA on identification and prioritization of infrastructure projects for funding consideration
  - c. The RIO Co-lead/sponsor of the Iowa Disaster Recovery Conference (December 9-10, Coralville) – “Learning from the Past/Planning for the Future”
    - 1. 250 persons in attendance
    - 2. Topics included: sustainability, disaster mitigation, impact on Iowa’s infrastructure, historic preservation, storm water management, floodplain mitigation, community redevelopment, among others
- 9. Activities and action towards creating a comprehensive, statewide infrastructure plan, including the creation of task forces in natural resources, energy, telecommunications, transportation and vertical infrastructure:**
- a. This project was launched in October.
  - b. Developed a process and identified constituencies which should be represented in each of the five sector areas (which will be called Sector Committees): Natural Resources, Energy, Telecommunications, Transportation and Vertical Infrastructure.
  - c. Further identified which of those constituencies should be represented in the coordinating, advisory body to this project, which will be called the Infrastructure Planning Task Force (IPTF).
  - d. Developed an assessment model for public sector infrastructure projects at the state level.
  - e. Formed the Core Team to manage the assessment and developing the infrastructure investment package. This team meets weekly.
  - f. IDED contacted key state agencies regarding both the immediate infrastructure investment package, with an explanation of the longer-term effort once that is completed: Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Iowa Utilities Board (IUB), Office of Energy Independence (OEI), Department of Transportation (DOT), and IDED (IDED).
  - g. A number of additional state agency directors were then contacted to participate in identifying the potential projects focusing on: housing, transmission, transportation, and water quality.

- h. Agency suggestions for infrastructure projects were solicited, gathered, organized, and presented in a summary matrix for agency leads' further discussion.
- i. A day-long session with agency heads and the Maryland Governor's Institute for Community Design was held to provide an opportunity for external feedback on the proposals submitted by the agency directors.
- j. The Core Team met with bonding attorneys to discuss innovative financing options for infrastructure projects and other potential funding options as revenue streams for sustaining infrastructure projects.
- k. Developed and implemented a local public sector assessment tool for local infrastructure projects and status. Included developing a letter from the Governor and Lt. Governor and a spreadsheet template for local entities to complete.
- l. Contacted and disseminated the local public sector project assessment tool to the following organizations for their subsequent distribution to their members:
  - i. Iowa League of Cities
  - ii. Iowa State Association of Counties
  - iii. School Administrators of Iowa
  - iv. Iowa Association of Community College Trustees
  - v. Iowa Department of Public Health

**10. Activities and action toward communication with Iowans about overall disaster impacts and the strategy planning process:**

- a. During the period of July through December 2008, the Rebuild Iowa Office Communications Team provided the following to keep Iowans informed about the disaster impact, strategy process and recovery efforts:
  - i. Created an e-mail distribution list for RIO press releases and updates. This list includes members of the media, flood victims, general constituents, Rebuild Iowa Office Advisory Commission members, Task Force members, lawmakers, plus anyone else who has an interest in the RIO.
  - ii. Issue weekly RIO updates on funding and disaster recovery programs via press releases every Friday afternoon.
  - iii. Issue monthly Iowa Recovery Times newsletter to e-mail distribution list. It is also posted on our Web site. RIO's Long-Term Community Recovery Teams distribute the newsletter directly to Iowans impacted by the disaster via community meetings.
  - iv. Issue joint releases with other governmental agencies or departments to provide information or clarification on issues such as recovery funding, tax-filing issues, recovery programs, etc.

- v. Developed in-house Web site ([www.rio.iowa.gov](http://www.rio.iowa.gov)) to respond to the changing status of recovery and the changing needs of disaster-impacted Iowans. The Web site is updated daily.
  - vi. Have a social media presence on sites like Twitter and Face book to distribute information and news releases from the Rebuild Iowa Office and further engage Iowans in new, creative ways outside of the everyday media.
  - vii. Created photo and video pages on the RIO Web site to allow Iowans to see first-hand recovery and rebuilding efforts. Iowans can also submit their own photos and videos via the Web site.
- b. Organized six “Speak Up Iowa!” meetings across the state to collect public input and hear feedback at the start of the disaster recovery effort. The RIO’s Web site also allowed Iowans to submit feedback for the “Speak Up Iowa!” report.
- c. Organized, staffed and handled media inquiries for all Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission (RIAC) meetings and all Task Force meetings.
- d. Create weekly “Rebuild Iowa Office Legislative Weekly” newsletter to inform legislators about the recovery process in their area.
- e. Schedule and assist in scheduling press conferences statewide (including press conferences for the Governor’s office) to bring the latest disaster-related developments directly to Iowans in their own communities.
- f. Scheduled and staffed media tours via TV, radio and newspaper statewide for flood-related mental health awareness campaign and to promote crisis counseling providers.
- g. Assisted in planning of initial “Jumpstart Iowa Recovery Initiative” PSA and advertising campaign.
- h. Develop information flyers and pamphlets for RIO’s activities.

**11. Activities and action toward and overall communication strategy for the recovery process:**

- a. The RIO Volunteer and Case Management Specialist team coordinated and facilitated Long Term Recovery Committee conference calls once a week to address challenges and provided the most up-to-date information on recovery programs and assistance available to individuals with unmet needs.
- b. During the first six months following the creation of RIO, the Communications Team has developed the following communication strategy to assist in the recovery process:
  - i. Created RIO Communications Strategy Plan and addendum.
  - ii. Lead “Point of Contact” coordination meetings twice a month with federal, state and local partners to ensure accuracy and consistency in programmatic messaging.

- iii. Closely monitor local news outlets and media clips to ensure accuracy of messaging relating to the disasters and recovery.
- iv. Follow-up with media outlets that provide misinformation to the public and ask for a correction.
- v. Held daily coordination conference calls every morning with Governor's Office and Homeland Security representatives (July through November).
- vi. Hold once a week meetings with Dept. of Economic Development and Iowa Finance Authority to discuss funding issues for homeowners, landlords and small businesses.
- vii. Attend once a week conference calls with Council of Government/Entitlement Cities to disburse information about funding issues and recovery efforts.
- viii. Attend twice a month conference calls with Long-Term Recovery Committees to discuss case management.
- ix. Work closely with the Iowa Concerns Hotline to keep a consistent message with their callers about new disaster recovery programs and contact information.

## **12. Activities and action toward engaging Councils of Government:**

- a. RIO staff engaged in face to face meetings with each COG on a weekly basis and held regional COG monthly meetings along with recovery committees in Oakville, Parkersburg, New Hartford, Waterloo and Cedar Falls Cedar River Initiative, Palo, and Waverly.
- b. The RIO staff facilitates monthly Regional COG meetings. In November 2008, the survey of COG involvement in disaster relief efforts identified unmet needs and what role for RIO to assist in their recovery efforts.
- c. Planning future opportunities to collaborate with COGs and Disaster Recovery Coordinators to include training, unresolved issues, regional workshops & meetings, and increased participation in IACT.



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